



Andreas Moustoxidis. Philologist, historian and politician. Oil painting (Lixouri Kefalonia, Iakovateios Library).

Neohellenica: An Introduction to Modern Greek in the Form of Dialogue Containing
Specimens of the Language from the Third Century B.C. to the Present Day; to which is
Added an Appendix Giving Examples of the Cypriot Dialect
1892

By Michael Constantinides

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Κερκύρα, τη 27 Μαΐου 1849.

CORFU, 27th May 1849.

Λογιώτατε Κύριε

Λαβὼν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν
ὑμῶν καὶ τὸ δῶρον δι' οὗ
με ἐφιλοφρονήσατε, ὁμολογῶ
πολλὰς χάριτας ἀντὶ τῶν
ἐπαίνων δι' ὧν ἐκοσμήσατε τὸ
ὄνομά μου, καίτοι ὑπερβαλ-
λόντων τὸ δίκαιον μέτρον.
Οὐδ' ἔχω πῶς κάλλιον ν'
ἀνταποδώσω τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἧς
με ἡξιώσατε προτιμήσεως εἰ μὴ
ἐκφράζων πρὸς ὑμᾶς μετὰ
πάσης εἰλικρινείας τὸ φρόνημά
μου.

Ἀναγνοὺς τὴν *Symaïs*,
ἐλυπήθην διότι ἡ γόνιμος τοῦ
συγγραφέως φαντασία, ἀντὶ

Most learned Sir,

I have received the
letter and the present with
which you have favoured me.
I return you many thanks for
the praise you bestowed upon
me, although it exceeds due
bounds. I do not know how
better to requite the preference
you have shown me than by
expressing with absolute sin-
cerity what my opinion is.

Having read the *Symaïs*, I
felt sorry that the prolific ima-
gination of the author, instead of

νὰ περιβάλῃ τὸ πόνημα τὸν κομψὸν πέπλον τῆς ποιήσεως, ἐνέδυσε τὸν σεβάσμιον τῆς ἱστορίας ἱματισμόν. "Ὅσῳ προχωρεῖ τις εἰς τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ βιβλίου, τόσῳ μᾶλλον καὶ εἰς τοὺς μὴ ὀξύδερκεῖς καταφαίνεται ἡ μυθοποιΐα. Ἀνάγκη ν' ἀνατρέψῃ τις τὰς μέχρι τοῦδε τῶν συγγραφέων παραδόσεις, ἀνάγκη νὰ μὴ παρακολουθήσῃ τὴν πρόοδον τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου νοῦς καὶ τῶν τεχνῶν ἔν' ἀποδεχθῇ εὐπίστως μέρος τοῦλάχιστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ μεμυθευμένων. Καὶ μετὰ δυσ-αρесκείας λέγω ὅτι καθ' ἕκαστον βῆμα ἀπαντῶνται προφανῇ σημεῖα πείθοντα ἢ ὅτι

dressing the work in the graceful garb of poetry, had invested it with the majestic robe of history. The farther any one proceeds with the perusal of the work, the stronger, even to dull-sighted people, becomes the evidence of fabrication. One must entirely upset all that has been handed down to us by historians up to the present day, one must refuse to follow the progress of the human mind and the advance of art, in order that even a part of what is fabled in your book may be credulously accepted. And I am reluctantly compelled to say that at every step there are

ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνόμα τοῦ Μελετίου
ἐκείνου λανθάνει τις τῶν
ἡμετέρων συγχρόνων, ἢ ὅτι
αὐτὸς ὁ ἡμέτερος σύγχρονος
εἰς τοὺς μύθους τοῦ Μελετίου
προσέθηκεν ἄλλους ἰδίους.

Ἐν ᾧ τοιαύτη εἶναι ἡ κρίσις
μου, καὶ τοιαύτη θέλει εἶσθαι
ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἡ κρίσις παντὸς
ἄλλου ἀναγνώστου, πῶς ἡδυνά-
μην νὰ συντελέσω εἰς τὴν
διάδοσιν τοῦ Συμαΐδος; Σχεδὸν
ἀκούω πολλὰ περὶ ἐμὲ τὰ
καταβοῶντα στόματα, οὐδ'
ἐπιθυμῶ νὰ κατηγορηθῶ ὡς
ἄγαν εὐπιστος ἢ ὡς συναίτιος
τῶν πεπλασμένων.

Πρὸς τιμὴν τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ
διὰ τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀγάπην
ἡνυχόμην ἢ λήθη νὰ καλύψῃ

met unmistakable signs either
that under the name of
Miletius is concealed one of our
own time, or that that contem-
porary of ours has added some
fables of his own to those of
Miletius.

While then such is my own
opinion, and such perforce must
be that of every other reader,
how can I contribute any aid to
spread the reputation of the
Symaïs? I can almost fancy
that I hear the tremendous
outcry that would be raised
against me; and I have no wish
to be accused of being either
absurdly credulous, or accessory
to the fiction.

For the honour of our nation
and out of my regard for you, I
wish the *Symaïs* were buried in

τὴν Συμαῖδα, ἣτις φαίνεται εἰς
ἐμὲ ἀπαίσιος πρόδρομος τῶν
ἄλλων παρ' ὑμῖν ἀνεκδότων.

Πρὸς ἔλεγχον τῆς γνησιό-
τητος τῶν χειρογράφων οὔτε
διόπτραι ἀπαιτοῦνται παλαιο-
γραφίας, οὔτε περγαμηνῶν
δοκιμασία. Ὁμολογῶ ὅτι, ἂν
καὶ ἐν Ἑλλάδι ἄλλως ἐδόξασαν
περὶ ἐμοῦ, δὲν ἐνόμισα ἐξ ἀρχῆς
ἐμαυτὸν ἀρμόδιον τῶν τοιούτων
κριτὴν. Καὶ ἐὰν διαθρυπτό-
μενος ὑπὸ ἀστηρίκτου τῶν
ἄλλων γνώμης, ἀπέδιδον εἰς
τὴν ψῆφόν μου κῦρος, ὅπερ ἐν
συνειδήσει αἰσθάνομαι ὅτι δὲν
ἔχει, ἡδυνάμην ἀξίως ὅχι μόνον
νὰ κατηγορηθῶ ἀλαζονείας,
ἀλλὰ καὶ περιπέσω εἰς γέλωτα,

oblivion, for it seems to me to
be a very inauspicious precursor
of the other unpublished works
in your possession.

In order to prove that a
manuscript is genuine, no
antiquarian's lens is required,
nor any scrutiny of the parch-
ment. I confess that, although
people in Greece have formed a
different opinion about me, I
have never considered myself a
proper judge of such matters ;
and, if I were weak enough to
be influenced by the unfounded
opinion of others, and attributed
any authority to my judgment
which in my conscience I feel
that it does not possess, I might
not only be justly accused of

ἀλλὰ καὶ περιπέσω εἰς γέλωτα,
οὐτινος θέλω νὰ ἀπαλλάξω τὴν
πολιάν μου τρίχα.

Ἄλλως δὲ ἡ γνησιότης
κειμένου τινὸς δὲν τεκμηριοῦται
ἐκ τοῦ χάρτου καὶ τοῦ σχή-
ματος τῶν γραμμάτων, ἀλλ' ἐκ
τοῦ χαρακτῆρος τοῦ λόγου, ἐκ
τῶν πραγμάτων περὶ ὧν δια-
λαμβάνει, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ παραλ-
ληλισμοῦ πρὸς ὃ τι διέσωσεν
εἰς ἡμᾶς ἡ ἀρχαιότης.

Ἐὰν δὲ ἔχητε τὴν συνείδησιν
ὅτι τὰ ἄλλα παρ' ὑμῶν χειρό-
γραφα δὲν εἶναι πλαστὰ καὶ
ὑποβολιμαῖα, ἐκδώσατε αὐτά,
καὶ θέλετε ἀπολάβει ὄφελος
καὶ τιμὴν. Ἄλλ' ἐπαναλέγω,
μὲ λυπεῖ ὅτι προηγέθη αὐτῶν
ἡ Συμαῖς.

not only be justly accused of
presumption, but be covered
with ridicule, an indignity to
which I am unwilling to expose
my grey hairs.

Besides, the genuineness of
a text is not ascertained by
the nature of the paper, or by
the shape of the letters, but
by its style and the subject it
treats of, and by comparison
with the examples which an-
tiquity has preserved for us.

But if you have the conscious-
ness that the other manuscripts
in your possession are not fabri-
cated counterfeits, publish them,
and you will reap both profit
and honour : but, I repeat, I am
sorry that the *Symaïs* has taken
the lead.

Συγχωρήσατε εἰς τὴν ἀπλό-
τητά μου. “Φίλος Πλάτων,
φιλτάτη δ’ ἀλήθεια.” Μὴ
ἐπιχειρεῖτε παράβολα ἔργα, ἐξ
ᾧ ἔτι μᾶλλον ταλαιπωρεῖται
ὁ βίος. Ἡ εὐφύια καὶ αἱ
γνώσεις ὑμῶν δύνανται νὰ
ὑποδείξωσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς εὐθυτέραν
καὶ εὐπορωτέραν ὁδόν.

ὁ ὑμέτερος
Ἀνδρέας Μουστοξύδης.

Forgive my plain-speaking.
“Plato is dear to me, but truth
is dearer still.” Have nothing
to do with hazardous under-
takings which render a man’s
life still more miserable. Your
abilities and attainments can
show you a straighter path and
one easier to pursue.

Yours
ANDREAS MUSTOXYDES.